Lydia Kinney

EDU 262

Essential Belief Statement

1/28/10

When I first applied to the University of Maine at Farmington I was accepted into the Elementary Education program; however, I quickly learned that I did not want to teach a broad range of subjects, but that I wanted to become an expert in one subject. Shortly after I had changed majors to Secondary Education with a concentration in English I enrolled in practicum. My placement was with grades 11 and 12. While I liked the subject matter I couldn’t help but noticed that the atmosphere, and attitudes of the students were completely different than that of the younger grades. Teaching at the middle school level offers the combination of being able to teach English specific classes while working with an age group that has not yet lost their zeal for school. In my experience middle school students have a greater tendency to express their excitement for a subject as they have yet to reach the stage where they feel as if they need to veil this excitement.

When I was in middle school I remember being so incredibly passionate. I also thought that I knew everything. I loved going to school; in fact, I hated missing a day of school. I didn’t want to miss anything especially the social aspect. I remember middle school being largely a social learning experience. This is not to say that I didn’t learn academically because I most certainly did, but certain social rules and norms are learned during your middle school years. I feel that this is a very important dynamic of the age group. Middle school students are at an age where they are becoming aware of the world around them and are developing their own thoughts and beliefs about many things. Social awareness is a huge aspect of the age group and it cannot be truly separated from their academics.

I think that a middle school student’s hyperawareness of the social world around them should be used as momentum to gain their interest in academics. My concentration allows me the freedom to choose books, media, or topics that lie within my students’ interests. Therefore, their interest could be a guiding factor in what I choose for material. This hyperawareness can also lead to hypersensitivity. I believe that middle school teachers need to be aware that their young students are often on over-drive. As a middle school teacher I believe that I need to be aware of this factor and take it into account while conducting classroom activities.

I have many hopes, dreams, and fears about teaching in a middle school setting. I hope to foster a learning environment in my classroom and school that is geared to specifically teach young adolescents. I want to create curriculum and utilize pedagogy that is designed with their specific age group in mind. I am afraid of working as a team with other teachers. While I deeply value others opinions and ideas and know that they add richness to any setting at the same time I fear the unknown variables that others bring as well. I worry about being bored by the level of content that I will be teaching at the middle school level. I hope that students will surprise me on this account. Underlying all of my hopes and fears I have optimism for my profession, my future students, and my career.